

Remarks/Arguments

In an Office Action dated June 29, 2006, claims 1-36 were rejected under § 102 over Considine. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections and submit that the claims are allowable.

Section 102 Rejections

The Office Action stated that Considine showed dedicated hardware assist circuitry as required in all of the independent claims. Applicants respectfully traverse this statement.

The Office Action indicated that the dedicated hardware assist circuitry was any of the other processors shown in Figure 2. Using claim 19 as exemplary, each port processor is to include dedicated hardware assist circuitry to perform first selected port processing functions. It is not appropriate to consider one port processor as dedicated hardware assist circuitry for another port processor as being done by the Office Action. First, by definition any other port processor (such as SFC 130, LRC 132 and SRC 134) is not a part of the selected port processor but is another port processor and so cannot qualify. Second, none of the back end processors (such as MIC 136, LIO 138 and SIO 140) are dedicated to any port processor but operate collectively as stated in Considine.

As to exemplary claims 21-24, the Office Action stated that Considine teaches various processors, each performing different functions. Applicants respectfully traverse this statement.

Claims 21-24 require second, and in some cases third, embedded processors included in each port processor. The Office Action reference to other processors is actually a reference to other port processors, not additional processors on a given port processor. They are clearly not embedded processors as required by the claim language.

Equivalent arguments apply to the relevant claims in claims 1-18 and 28-36. As such, Applicants submit that the claims were, and are, allowable over Considine.

Amendments

Claims 1, 10, 19 and 28 have been amended to include the port processor including a frame classifier, with the frame classifier performing specified determinations. Applicants submit that Considine has no such teaching and so the amendments are further reasons the claims are allowable over Considine.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants are co-filing an Information Disclosure Statement and request it be considered.

Conclusion:

Reconsideration of the pending claims in light of the above remarks is respectfully requested. Allowance of all of the claims is submitted as being proper.

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